

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God



Introduction

America was founded on religious freedom. Many colonists came to America to obtain religious rights. Religion played an important role in the daily lives of the colonists. Beginning in the 1730's, there was a renewal of interest in religion in the colonies. This period of religious revival is known as the "Great Awakening." One of the most important ministers during this time was Jonathan Edwards. Edwards believed that it was not enough to understand religious ideas. He thought that a true believer had to understand that they were powerless against the wrath of God.

Directions - Read each section and answer the questions that follow using complete sentences.

"O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it apart; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment."

1. What image does Edwards use to describe the condition of sinners?

2. Does the sinner have any power in the situation they are in? Explain.

"How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now

hearing this sermon, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery for all eternity. We do not know who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they may now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much conviction, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a mournful and bitter cry over him! But, alas! instead of one, how many will remember this sermon in hell! And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, even before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here, in some seats of this church, in health, quiet and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning"

3. What does Edwards say that a person needs to be to not end up in hell?

4. How long does Edwards say that the misery of hell will last?

5. What does Edwards say about those people who think they are saved simply because they lead moral and religious lives?

"And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day where Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands calling, and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day where many are flocking to Him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north, and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to Him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful it is to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are suffering grief and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and cry because of the apprehension of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Aren't your souls as precious as the souls of the people in the nearby town where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?"

6. How does Edwards suggest that a person can achieve salvation?

7. On a separate piece of paper, draw an advertisement that conveys the same message as the sermon.